

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR
WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 2005

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday, June 8, 2005.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

MEMORIAL DAY

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank America's veterans and to offer my sympathy to those families that will experience for the first time and for many, many times the difficulty of Memorial Day, for they are the families that are now suffering the loss of a loved one who has fallen in battle or in the service of his or her country.

Today, we had the honor of traveling to Arlington Cemetery, as I said earlier, to place the wreath of honor in honor of women who have fallen in battle. The good news about America is that in times of conflict, however we may disagree on the policy, we are united behind the men and women who leave their homes and leave their families and leave all that they love to be able to serve this country.

My sadness, however, is that there are so many that are coming back in caskets covered and draped by the American flag. And so I think it is extremely important that on this Memorial Day, we are united in our honoring and our admiration and our affection for those who have lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan.

May God bless them, God bless their families, and God bless the United States of America.

COMMUNICATION FROM INSPECTOR GENERAL, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHLMANN of New York) laid before the House the following communication from Steven A. McNamara, Inspector General, House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 16, 2005.
MEMORANDUM

To: Hon. DENNIS HASTERT, Speaker of the House.
Hon. TOM DELAY, Majority Leader of the House.
Hon. NANCY PELOSI, Minority Leader of the House.
From: STEVEN A. McNAMARA, Inspector General.
Subject: Notification of Resignation and Retirement.

Please accept my offer of resignation, as the Inspector General for the U.S. House of

Representatives, effective May 30, 2005. This date will also be my effective date of retirement from Federal Service.

It has been an honor to serve the House as the Inspector General for the last five years. My goal, and that of my staff, has been to help the House achieve the best use of all the dollars it spends, increase efficiencies, and ensure the health, safety, and security of Members, staff, and visitors. Through the combined support of the House Leadership, the Committee on House Administration, and the hard work of my staff, I believe we have helped the House accomplish its administrative goals.

Now, after slightly more than 35 years of Federal Service, I look forward to a new chapter in my life; the pursuit of a hobby and business venture as a kayak instructor and kayaking guide.

Once again, it has been a great honor to serve the House of the Inspector General for the last five years. It has been a fulfilling and rewarding experience!

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

INTRODUCTION OF REDUCING CRIME AND TERRORISM AT AMERICA'S SEAPORTS ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, along with the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE), chairman of the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security, I am pleased to introduce the Reducing Crime and Terrorism at America's Seaports Act of 2005.

There are 361 seaports in the United States that serve essential national interests by facilitating the flow of trade and the movement of cruise passengers, as well as supporting the effective and safe deployment of U.S. Armed Forces. These seaport facilities and other marine areas cover some 3.5 million square miles of ocean area and 95,000 miles of coastline.

Millions of shipping containers pass through our ports every month. A single container has room for as much as 60,000 pounds of explosives, 10 to 15 times the amount in the Ryder truck used to blow up the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. When you consider that a single ship can carry as many as 8,000 containers at one time, the vulnerability of our seaports is alarming.

Each year, more than 141 million ferry and cruise ship passengers, more than 2 billion tons of domestic and international freight and 3 billion tons of oil move through U.S. seaports. Millions of truck-size cargo containers are off-loaded onto U.S. docks. Many seaports are still protected by little more than a chain link fence and, in far too

many instances, have no adequate safeguards to ensure that only authorized personnel can access sensitive areas of the port. If we allow this system to continue unchecked, it is only a matter of time until terrorists attempt to deliver a weapon of mass destruction to our doorstep via ship, truck or cargo container.

New reports by the Government Accountability Office, Congress' investigative arm, fault both the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism and the Container Security Initiative. C-TPAT allows international shippers to get quicker clearance through Customs in exchange for voluntary security measures. But the GAO said that the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's vetting process was not thorough enough. It found that only 10 percent of the certified members had been validated through an actual physical inspection by the Agency. The rest had been certified by paperwork applications.

As part of the recently passed Homeland Security authorization bill, the House took some important steps to improve the screening of cargo by expanding the Container Security Initiative and refocusing it, based on risk. But the truth is that not every container can be inspected, and we need to use other tools at our disposal to deter those who would use our seaports as a point of attack until we can inspect or somehow verify each container. Strengthening criminal penalties, as Chairman COBLE and I are proposing with this bill, is one way we make our Nation's ports less vulnerable.

The Reducing Crime and Terrorism at America's Seaports Act of 2005 will fill a gaping hole in our defense against terrorism and make American ports, passengers and cargo safer. Our bill is substantially similar to bipartisan Senate legislation introduced earlier this year by Senators BIDEN and SPECTER and supported by other key members of the Judiciary Committee, including Senators DIANNE FEINSTEIN and ORRIN HATCH. The Senate version of this legislation has been reported favorably by the Senate Judiciary Committee and is awaiting action by the full Senate.

Our bill makes common-sense changes to our criminal laws and will help to close security gaps confronting our ports. The amendment will make it a crime to use a vessel to smuggle terrorists or dangerous materials, including nuclear material, into the U.S., impose stiff criminal penalties for providing false information to a Federal law enforcement officer at a port or on a vessel, and double the sentence of anyone who fraudulently gains access to a seaport.

Our bill would also directly address several immediate threats by increasing penalties for smugglers who misrepresent illicit cargo. It would also bridge specific gaps in current Federal law by making it a crime for a vessel operator to fail to stop when ordered to